Guide to Career Progression Paths

NASA Langley Research Center

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Langley Research Center Guide to Career Progression Paths

OVERVIEW OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Career progression is an ongoing process in which employees should remain active, continually working toward their goals. To make the most of career opportunities, employees must take primary responsibility for planning and monitoring their own careers. This begins with a self-assessment of values, competencies and interests. Using this information, individuals define their career goals and, together with their supervisors, develop realistic plans for reaching these career goals.

Supervisors play a critical role in this process by actively supporting and contributing to employee career progression efforts. Perhaps the most important element of this role is that of coach and counselor. Supervisors should advise employees regarding strengths and areas for improvement to assist them in the self-assessment process and in the development of their Individual Development Plans. Additionally, supervisors can help their employees by encouraging them to pursue appropriate training and development experiences and providing information about career options.

The Center supports supervisors and employees by providing an atmosphere that stimulates personal and professional growth. This includes fostering a climate that promotes mobility and development opportunities, providing training experiences that aid employees in identifying career goals and encouraging the pursuit of these goals. In addition, the Center establishes ongoing systems and processes that balance employee career goals and organizational needs, thus ensuring that LaRC has the continuity of talent and appropriate skill mix needed to accomplish its mission.

Career progression will be different for each person, and no process guarantees reassignments, training opportunities, or promotions. What a career development program cannot do is provide a checklist that, when completed, will result in additional responsibilities or advancement. What it can and is designed to do is provide employees with information, the environment and tools they need to develop their capabilities. By doing so, both the employee and the Center benefit.

OVERVIEW OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A Career Development Program is a system of long-term training and development that fits the work being done to meet the mission of the organization; creates a well-rounded workforce where all individuals can develop a broader set of competencies; and promotes self initiative. Career development is a proven methodology. Organizations invest in career development because they understand the benefit for employees and the organization. LaRC senior management agrees — career development makes sense. The CPPT effort is LaRC's first step in implementing a comprehensive career development program.

Enhancing our professionalism through career development promotes current and future productivity and quality, increases accountability in individuals for their own development, and makes LaRC a more cohesive organization. Partnerships will grow between supervisors and employees, among employees, and across work units as developmental assignments are implemented LaRC-wide.

Through career planning and participating in enrichment activities, you can:

- become an expert in your current job;

- expand your responsibilities and enrich your job;

- broaden your responsibilities through a job change;

- advance to a higher level; and

- prepare yourself for a new career.

The Career Development Program objectives are:

- a knowledge-based workforce;

- continual development and learning;

- business growth;

- improved leader pipeline;

- increased employee satisfaction and morale;

- improved customer satisfaction;

- increased number of employees qualified to fill higher-graded positions;

- increased competencies of the functional/technical employees; and

- more time for managers and supervisors to focus on real operational issues due to increased employee effectiveness.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLANS

A Career Development Program is based on the competencies, grade level criterion and enrichment activities as identified in the Career Development Plans for each family of occupations. A Career Development Plan is specific to an occupational group and provides a reference for the competencies and enrichment activities needed for success in an employee's occupation and serves as a tool for employees to manage their careers. The purpose of the Career Development Plans are to provide all employees with a standard roadmap, from entry through executive levels, for enhancing their personal and professional growth, and to assist LaRC in developing a highly competent and professional work force. More specifically, the Career Development Plans' objectives are to:

- provide an *overview of the career progression process*;

- identify typical *career paths, grade level criteria, and enrichment activities* for Administrative/Clerical, Program/Project Management, Technician, Mission Support and Engineer/Scientist/Supervisor;

- provide employees and their supervisors with a *single source reference* to assist in determining appropriate training and to prepare employees for more responsible positions;

- assist supervisors in making *effective use of scarce training resources* by identifying critical competencies and training courses so employees can attend the appropriate courses at the appropriate time; and

- enable employees to *plan and sequence appropriate career training and development.*

LaRC's philosophy of career progression emphasizes flexibility and multiple approaches to meeting individual and organizational needs. The Center does not dictate a highly-structured process or one best approach, but instead recognizes the need for individual choice and initiative.

While the Center's approach to career development is not prescriptive in nature, there are some fundamental principles that are useful to understand. At LaRC, career progression is viewed as a process of personal and professional growth composed of two major elements:

1. **Career Planning -** Individuals identify opportunities, make choices, set goals based on self-assessment and devise action plans to attain those goals.

2. **Career Management -** The Center establishes systems and processes that develop individual talent; balance employee career goals with organizational needs; provide employees with career counseling, training and development; and ensure that LaRC has the appropriate skill mix needed to accomplish its mission.

What is Included in a Career Development Plan?

- Typical Career Paths with Job Titles and Grade Levels
- Grade Level Criterion
- Enrichment Activities

HOW TO USE THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Career Path

A career path is a progression of positions in one or more occupational series. As illustrated in the sample below, each career path is comprised of entrance points, grade level and job title(s), and exit opportunities. Entrance points are located on the left side of the career path diagram and include each identified grade level within the occupational series. Common entrance points include academia, other occupational series, other NASA centers and government agencies, and industry. For example, attorneys entering LaRC at the GS 11 level typically come from a co-op program, accredited law school, NASA Headquarters, or private practice.

Grade levels and associated job titles are found in the center of the diagram and range from entry-level to the highest achievable position for the occupational series. Common job titles are associated with each grade level; however, the list of job titles presented is not exhaustive. For example, Attorney Advisor is a common title for attorneys at the GS 11 level.

Exit opportunities are located on the right side of the diagram, and represent opportunities for employees to assume new roles, either within or outside of LaRC. Common exit opportunities include moving into another occupational series, moving into a lateral position, advancing to a higher grade level, or transferring to another center or government agency. For example, attorneys at the GS 11 level may be promoted to the GS 12 level, obtain a position at NASA headquarters, or move into private practice. In addition, attorneys interested in other occupational series may review opportunities for a variety of occupations across LaRC.

Employees can utilize the career path diagram to identify his/her current occupational series. In addition, employees can view other occupational series. For example, an attorney can review the career path for the 905 series and/or review career paths for another occupational series that he/she is interested in pursuing.

Career Path Progression
Occupational Series 905 Attorney and 1222 Patent Counsel

Entrance Points	Grade Level Job Title	Exit Opportunities
Co-op program, accredited law school graduate or LLM, NASA Headquarters, private practice*	**Grade 11** Attorney Advisor	Promoted to GS 12, NASA Headquarters, private practice*
Accredited law school graduate, one year experience or LLM, NASA Headquarters, private practice*	**Grade 12** Attorney Advisor	Promoted to GS 13, NASA Headquarters, private practice*
NASA Headquarters, private practice*	**Grade 13** Attorney Advisor	Promoted to GS 14, NASA Headquarters, private practice*

Criterion

Criteria describe the job duties and tasks required for effective job performance at each grade level. The criterion consists of two components: grade level and competency. The brief criterion sample below lists the competencies linked to grade level required for employees in the attorney occupational series.

Employees can utilize the criterion to identify:

- overall competencies for the occupational series.
  - For example, the competencies identified for employees in the attorney occupational series are technical knowledge, legal advice and counsel, and legal research. Employees can look across grade levels to see the differences in tasks linked to changes in grade level.

- current grade level to review tasks linked to competencies.
  - For example, employees at the GS 11 can review the required tasks linked with competencies associated with this grade level in the occupational series.

- projected grade level to compare current tasks to those of higher grade levels.
  - For example, employees at the GS 11 can review the tasks at the GS 12 and higher levels to determine differences between their current grade level criterion and higher grade level criterion.

- grade level criterion in a different occupational series.
  - For example, employees in the attorney occupational series who are interested in the patent counsel occupational series can review the targeted competencies and tasks associated with each grade level in the patent counsel series.

The information contained in the criterion can be used to determine training and development needs. For example, an employee can utilize the criterion to determine if he or she needs to further develop communication skills based on his or her ability to perform the tasks listed in the criterion for communication. If an employee determines they need to enhance these skills, he or she can review the enrichment activities listed under the communication competency for possible developmental opportunities.

Criterion			
Occupational Series 905 Attorney			
Competency	GS 11	GS 12	GS 13
Technical Knowledge	With Senior Attorney and supervisor direction and approval, applies knowledge of the fundamentals of law (e.g., contract law, personnel law, ethics and fiscal law) to assist attorneys and Center clients with resolving basic and routine legal issues.	With Senior Attorney oversight, applies knowledge of a variety of legal subject matters (e.g., procurement, personnel law, ethics, fiscal, FOIA, privacy, claims, and agreements) to assist clients and senior attorneys with resolving difficult, non-precedent setting legal questions by providing legal opinions and through conducting aspects of trial preparation.	With minimal Senior Attorney oversight, applies advanced knowledge of a variety of legal subject matters (e.g., procurement, personnel, ethics, fiscal, FOIA, privacy, claims, and agreements) to resolve difficult legal issues that establish precedents binding on the Center; Center personnel and organizational directors rely on knowledge applied in independently conducting meetings with clients, by providing legal guidance and opinions, and by conducting trials and hearings.
Legal Advice & Counsel	Serves as legal advisor on issues involving application of fundamentals of law, with guidance and approval of Senior Attorney Advisors.	Serves as legal advisor on multidisciplinary questions and issues, with approval of Senior Attorney Advisors.	Serves as legal advisor on complex multidisciplinary questions and issues, with minimal oversight of Senior Attorney Advisors.
Legal Research	Conducts assigned legal research related to the application of statutes, rules, and regulations, hearings, and legislative issues.	Conducts independent legal research addressing multiple issues related to the application of statutes, rules and regulations, hearings, and legislative issues.	Conducts independent legal research and analysis addressing issues covering multiple areas of law and related to complex legal or factual issues with broad or binding legal impact and high level liability exposure for the Center.

Enrichment Activities

Enrichment activities are training and development opportunities that employees can utilize to develop their skills in specific competency areas. For example, employees in the attorney occupational series can determine training and development opportunities in knowledge of litigation, communication, and agency practices. In addition, employees can view the various opportunities available at each grade level. Furthermore, employees can view the enrichment activities in another occupational series to determine training and development opportunities according to grade level and competency area.

Enrichment Activities Occupational Series 905 Attorney and 1222 Patent Counsel		
Knowledge of Litigation	**Communication**	**Agency Practices**
Grade 11-12 - On-the-job training in specified performance areas - Mentoring from colleagues and Senior Attorneys - Supervised projects & assignments - Beginning Training Seminars - Legal Conferences - Rotational assignments	- Verbal and Written Communication courses - Art of Persuasion courses - Negotiations courses - Mediation courses - On-the-job training - Teambuilding training	- On-the-job training - Advisor on Special Agency Projects - Advisor to Agency Team - Agency specific courses (e.g., MAST, MIP, MAP) - Attend Agency Information Symposia
Grade 13 - On-the-job training in specified performance areas - Mentoring from colleagues and Senior Attorneys - Supervised projects & assignments - Beginning Training Seminars - Legal Conferences - Rotational assignments	- Verbal and Written Communication courses - Art of Persuasion courses - Negotiations courses - Mediation courses - On-the-job training - Teambuilding training	- On-the-job training - Advisor on Special Agency Projects - Advisor to Agency Team - Agency specific courses (e.g., MAST, MIP, MAP) - Attend Agency Information Symposia

CAREER DEVELOPMENT ROLES

It is the responsibility of both employees and managers/supervisors at LaRC to ensure that career development is achieved. For career development to be effective, everyone must take responsibility and play a role. Following are brief descriptions of the responsibilities involved in career development.

Employee:

- Performs self-assessment

- Learns about LaRC opportunities

- Defines career goals and identifies relevant training and development

- Discusses goals with supervisor

- Prepares Individual Development Plan

- Understands the Career Development Program

- Understands the results of the needs assessment performed for their organizational and functional/occupational levels

Manager/Supervisor:

- Defines organizational-level goals for training and development

- Learns employee goals

- Encourages and establishes appropriate timing for employee training and development

- Follows up with employees after training and development opportunities

- Coaches/counsels employees

- Provides feedback on employee progress

- Determines the need for positions based upon the goals and objectives outlined in the Center strategic and business plan,

- Determines the duties and responsibilities of positions and developing position descriptions with assistance from the Human Resources Office

- Ensures that employees either have, or are provided with, opportunities to obtain required competencies

The first-line supervisor is in the best position to observe work behavior, understand and evaluate employee performance and identify when the employee is ready to assume greater responsibility and is most knowledgeable about tasks that need to be completed.

LaRC:

- Provides strategic vision/direction

- Provides organizational development support

- Offers individual development tools and programs

-
- Analyzes training needs

- Fosters an environment for career growth

- Encourages training and development opportunities

Human Resources:

Human Resources administers a variety of career services to benefit all LaRC employees, including providing training options and coaching managers and supervisors on how to use the Career Development Plans effectively.

Here are just a few specific examples of how the Career Development Program can benefit you...

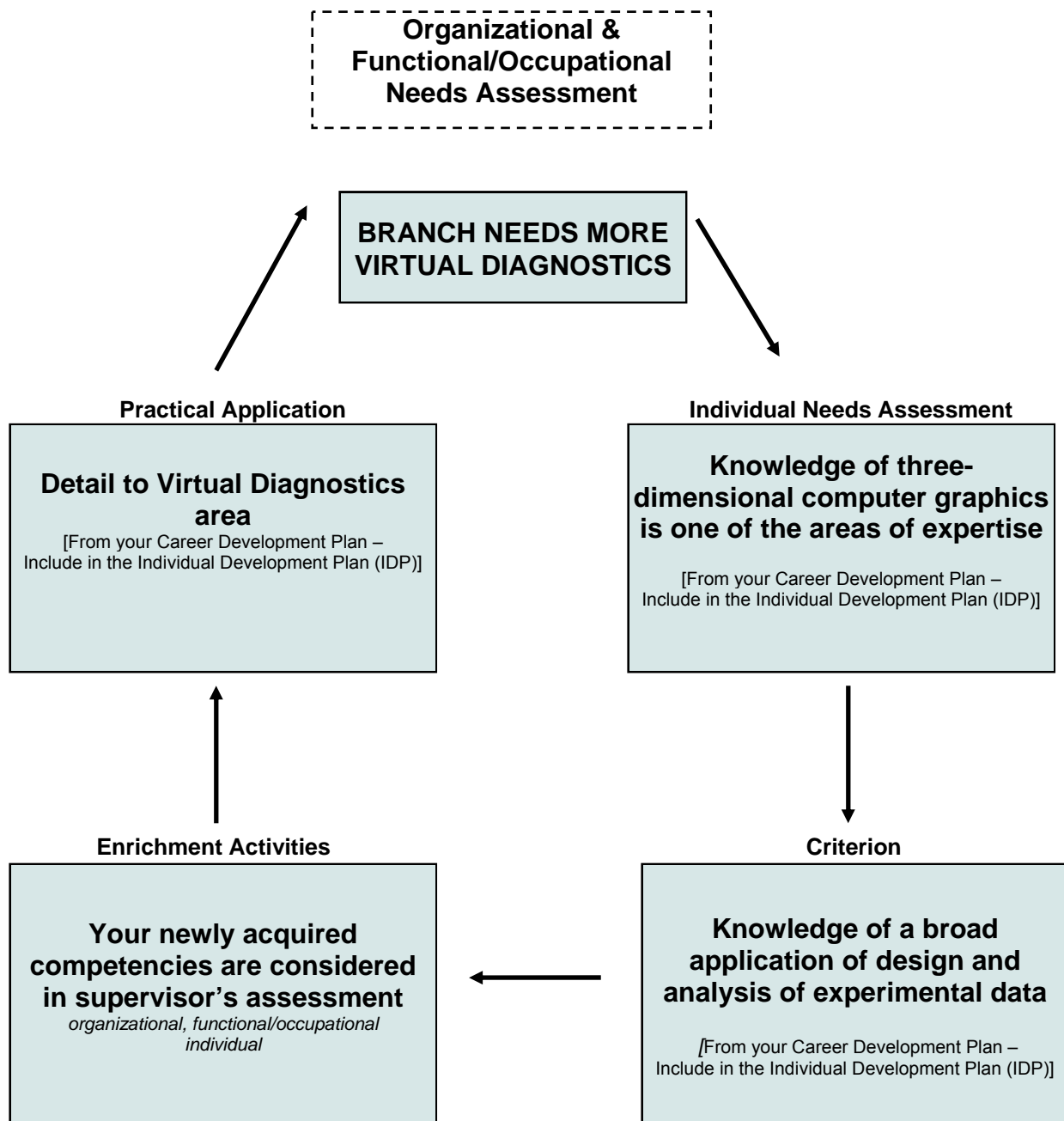| If you are in this grade...	You can...
Grade 14-15	• Enhance managerial and leadership skills for your current position • Prepare yourself for an executive position • Learn how to improve the performance of your teams, unit, and individual employees
Grade 12-13	• Improve team building, managerial, or program management skills • Obtain certification (e.g., CPA, CIA) • Develop managerial and leadership skills • Further your education
Grade 8-11	• Improve your technical and computer skills • Learn more about supervising others, working on a team, and project management • Further your education to help prepare you for a professional job
Grade 4-7	• Improve your computer, customer service, administrative, or other skills to help prepare you for advancement or movement into another career path • Further your education

CAREER OPTIONS

A number of career options are available at LaRC. The combination of individual career preferences and organizational opportunities shape the direction of the employee's career. Too often, individuals focus solely on advancement to the next grade level. This limited view of career development ignores other viable options such as lateral movement, exploration of other areas of interest and career enrichment.

Lateral movement may provide the challenges and experiences that come with a new role while offering an opportunity to broaden knowledge and skills in new functional areas. This type of move does not involve a grade change, but it can provide the breadth of experience needed to pursue future career goals. Exploration of other areas of interest can include temporary rotations to other organizations and informational interviews with managers in other areas. These temporary changes may offer an employee a broader perspective and a breadth of knowledge in other areas.

Career enrichment provides another means for employees to enhance their abilities and augment their skill base. This typically involves increasing the skill variety, challenge or autonomy of the current position. This option allows employees to introduce change into their jobs and provides an avenue for growth without requiring movement to a different position. A limited view of career development emphasizes only promotion within a discrete field. A broader, more systemic view recognizes that enhancing current job responsibilities and moving in both lateral and upward directions all involve growth and development.

USING THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN — AN EXAMPLE

The following is an example of how a competency or area of expertise is identified and developed. In this example, the organizational staffing plan has identified that the branch needs more expertise in Virtual Diagnostics due to emerging new lines of business for the Center. The Career Development Plan associated with the individual's current occupation shows that one applicable criteria is knowledge of three-dimensional computer graphics for instrumentation system design and analysis. The Career Development Plan recommends a rotational assignment or detail in the Virtual Diagnostics area. The employee agrees to a 120-day detail to work on a critical project developing instrumentation for analysis and display of Exploration related experimental data. This is then documented on the employee's Individual Development plan (IDP). The employee successfully applies the newly acquired knowledge and skills to enhance another project once the detail is completed. This experience and accomplishment are considered during the employee's next appraisal and during the next staffing plan update.

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     Organizational &
│ Functional/Occupational  │
     Needs Assessment
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BRANCH NEEDS MORE VIRTUAL DIAGNOSTICS

Practical Application

Detail to Virtual Diagnostics area
[From your Career Development Plan –
Include in the Individual Development Plan (IDP)]

Individual Needs Assessment

Knowledge of three-dimensional computer graphics is one of the areas of expertise

[From your Career Development Plan –
Include in the Individual Development Plan (IDP)]

Enrichment Activities

Your newly acquired competencies are considered in supervisor's assessment
organizational, functional/occupational individual

Criterion

Knowledge of a broad application of design and analysis of experimental data

[From your Career Development Plan –
Include in the Individual Development Plan (IDP)]

Langley Research Center Guide to Career Progression Paths

STEPS TOWARD CAREER DEVELOPMENT – USING THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLANS TO DRAFT THE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

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        ▼ Identify Career Path

   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │ Identify Competencies to │
   │ Develop                  │
   └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │ Identify Training &      │
   │ Development Opportunities│
   └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │ Formalize the IDP        │
   └─────────────────────────┘

   ┌─────────────────────────┐
   │ Participate in Training &│
   │ Development Activities    │
   │ and Adjust IDP           │
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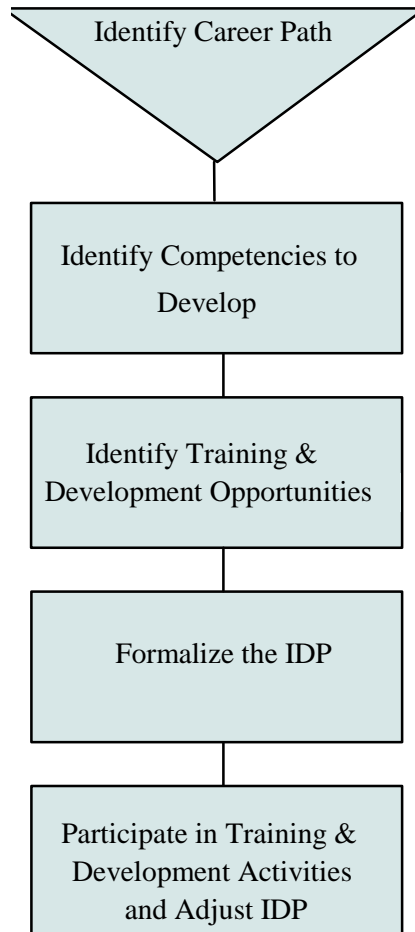
## STEP 1: WHERE CAN I GO FROM HERE? — IDENTIFYING CAREER PATHS

Before preparing your IDP, it is helpful to think long term. Where do you want to be in five years, ten years, fifteen years? What career path are you on now? Is it going to take you where you want to be? What other career options are available?

There are several options available in any career development system:

- Progress in a career ladder

- Pursue a career path

- Work in a dual track

- Explore career transition opportunities

What Is a Career Ladder?

A career ladder is a progression of positions in an occupational series. Frequently, career ladder positions result from positions whose grades have been lowered for recruitment purposes. For example, there may be difficulty recruiting candidates at the full performance level.
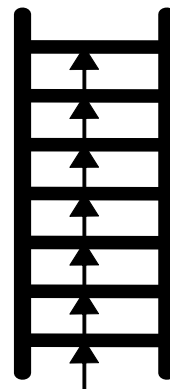
Career ladders may also be implemented for training and employee development strategy reasons. The employee may advance from entry to intermediate to full performance level to senior/manager to executive levels. The employee becomes qualified for higher-level positions through a combination of resident training and/or independent study, increasingly more responsible experience, and on-the-job training. The promotion pattern in career ladder positions is normally 52 weeks between promotions, unless work requirements dictate a longer period (e.g., the need for an employee to experience the complete cycle of higher-level work).

What Is a Career Path?

A career path is similar to a career ladder, except that more than one occupational series is involved. An employee may be in one occupational series, but take a "bridge" position, allowing the employee to move into a different, but related, occupational series. Movement in a career path can be either upward or lateral. Movement to a different, non-related, occupational series may require the employee to voluntarily take a lower grade to qualify for the position.
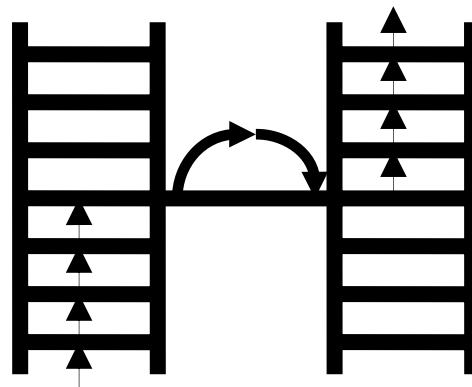
Career paths identify job progression opportunities and provide employees with assistance in pursuing their career goals. This section of the guide explains the primary career paths at LaRC. Studying these paths leads to a better understanding of available career options and results in more effective career planning

The paths cover several broad categories of occupations including Clerical/Administrative, Program/Project Management, Technician, Mission Support, and Engineer/Scientist/Supervisor. A sample of the skills and criteria that describe each grade are included, as well as appropriate enrichment (developmental) opportunities. These paths and accompanying descriptions are examples of alternatives and should be viewed as options available at the Center.

With the diversity of work at LaRC, a few occupations may fall outside the paths shown. For these occupations as well as the positions in the paths described, supervisors and human resources representatives can provide more specific information. Managers and employees can

also refer to the OPM Classification Standards and Guides specifically related to these occupations.

What Are Dual Tracks?

With dual tracks, an employee receives training for the current assignment as well as for a related but different job with its own training and experience requirements. Experience required for qualification in the secondary assignment may be attained by periodic details, cross training, or developmental assignments.
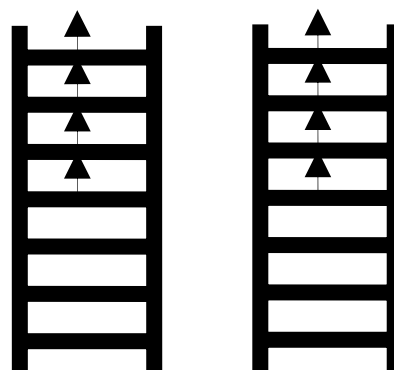
What Are Career Transitions?

Career transitions allow a great deal of flexibility for employees and supervisors. Employees easily move to positions that require similar competencies and are provided opportunities for training, growth, and variety.
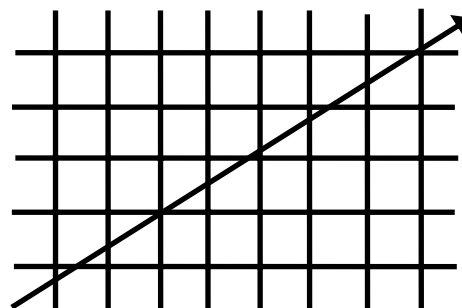
The Career Development Plans provide you the information needed for the various options described above. Typical career paths for the various occupations are presented in the plans. The career paths include the most common possible tracks within LaRC. They also depict the occupations that typically feed into each of the occupations covered by the plan.

STEP 2: WHAT DO I NEED TO LEARN? — IDENTIFYING COMPETENCIES TO DEVELOP

Each Career Development Plan includes the competencies linked to grade level criterion and related enrichment activities. You can look at the Career Development Plan to determine the competencies needed to progress in an occupational path.

Competencies

LaRC's Career Development Program is based on competencies identified as required for individual or a group of related occupational series. These competencies were identified by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from each of the various occupational series. Competencies are measurable patterns of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.

The Career Development Plans describe two types of competencies — general and technical. General competencies are required for effective performance across many occupations. Some competencies are cognitive (e.g., Reading or Reasoning) and others may reflect a mixture of cognitive and social skills (e.g., Teamwork or Interpersonal Skills). Technical competencies tend

to be occupation-specific knowledges required for effective performance in one or a few particular occupations (e.g., Contract Management).

Needs Assessment and Responsibilities

Once you have identified the competencies you need to improve by utilizing the grade level criterion and enrichment activities for the relevant occupation, a discussion should occur between the employee and supervisor. For a valuable discussion to take place, a needs assessment should be conducted.

A needs assessment is the process of identifying *1) performance requirements within an agency (i.e., grade level criterion), and 2) the "gap" between required and current performance.* A needs assessment explores the causes and reasons for the gap, methods for closing or eliminating the gap, and the consequences for ignoring the gap. A comprehensive, ongoing needs assessment offers many benefits. Focusing the needs assessment on the agency's mission and critical occupational and performance requirements will help:

- employees and managers identify performance requirements that can be satisfied best by training and other developmental strategies;

- focus training and education dollars where they are needed most; and

- eliminate redundant training efforts.

Needs assessments can be conducted at multiple levels — individual, functional/occupational, and organizational. Needs assessment can be conducted using various techniques, including group and individual interviews, surveys, and observation.

Individual Assessment — At the individual level, needs assessment *explores differences between required and current performance levels of individual employees.* If a gap exists, it explores the causes for the gap and suggests how employees can expand their sets of competencies by engaging in the training and development opportunities such as those described in the enrichment activities section of each Career Development Path.

Functional/Occupational Assessment — Needs assessment of the functional/occupational groups explores *differences between required and current performance levels of key functional/ occupational groups.*

Organizational Assessment — The organizational assessment *looks at broad performance issues and opportunities to make changes or improvements in the agency, and explores differences between required and current performance levels.* Generally, the needs assessment process should start at the organizational level.

Needs assessment data are collected from multiple sources (e.g., Career Development Plans, performance appraisals, IDPs) and analyzed by the employee, the supervisor, and appropriate levels in the organization. The results help to accurately and completely define the performance gaps and identify possible causes. Solutions, including training and other developmental activities, are explored. The best training and development approaches for closing the performance gap are identified upon exploration of all available opportunities. For the needs assessment process to be successful, both supervisors and employees must play an active role.

STEP 3: HOW CAN I GAIN IMPORTANT COMPETENCIES? — IDENTIFYING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Organizations need to become "learning organizations," which can only be done through investments in training and development, coupled with empowerment.

Overview of Career Development Methods

After determining the competencies to be developed, training and development activities can be selected. Described below are some general types of developmental activities, not specific to LaRC. Following the description of general types of activities are enrichment activities specific to LaRC. These are intended only as examples, not an exhaustive list of all available opportunities.

Formal classroom training — Formal classroom training is often the first type of training that comes to mind, although, it is not the only way to enhance knowledge and skills. This type of training:

- includes courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences; and

- can be offered by LaRC, colleges and universities, training, professional, and other organizations.

Developmental assignments — This includes assignments to new positions that provide the employee ways to learn new techniques or perform different types of work. Developmental assignments:

- provide management with the opportunity to cross-train employees in more than one competency, providing staffing flexibility;

- enhance employees' understanding of other LaRC functions, systems, operations, and relationships;

- provide employees with a way to enhance their competencies, making them more competitive for future career opportunities; and

- can be competitive or noncompetitive and vary according to length and organizational or geographic location.

Self-directed training/self development — A self development activity (sometimes called independent study) is an individual, voluntary effort initiated and conducted by the employee. It can be funded by LaRC or may need to be self-funded. In many cases, students may pursue fully accredited college level courses through independent study. This training may occur in a group setting, or at an individual pace, and can include:

- courses at local colleges and universities, computer-based instruction, and distance learning;

- courses offered by professional/civic organizations, public school continuing education departments, etc.;

- college correspondence courses; and

- reading professional journals and books.

Long-term training (LTT) — This refers to training and education opportunities to which an employee is assigned on a continuous basis (full-time or part-time) for more than 120 calendar days. Examples include the SES Career Development Program (SES CDP) and the Leadership Development Program (LDP). LTT:

- may occur in Government or non-Government facilities; and

- may include both formal training programs and planned developmental assignments.

Continuing professional education (CPE) — Generally, professional work requires knowledge that can only be acquired through an undergraduate or graduate program at an accredited academic institution. To remain current after graduation, professionals must continue their learning through CPE.

- It is usually the professional's responsibility to determine the specific CPE programs that meet their educational goals and objectives.

- Some CPE activities may be conducted on the employee's own time and personal expense.

- Some CPE may be provided using LaRC or other Government resources, depending on how directly related the specific activity is to the employee's current assignment or career ladder and depending on funding.

On the job training (OJT) — OJT is the primary type of training and development an employee receives, but it is the least recognized. OJT is typically presented one-on-one at the work site. Examples of OJT include job swaps, rotations, and details. To be effective, OJT must:

- include well-planned sessions between the employee and a designated trainer; and

- be led by a trainer who knows the job, has the desire and ability to train and provide feedback, and is willing to set aside sufficient time to accomplish the training without interruption at the work site.

LaRC Programs and Courses

 The programs and courses detailed below are just a few examples of enrichment activities available at LaRC.   For additional information, please contact the Organizational Development and Workforce Relations Branch at 864-2585.

- Training and Developmental Opportunities:
    - Training and developmental opportunities and related information are available on the OHCM Web Site at http://ohcm.larc.nasa.gov/training/

- Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP):

o   CTAP services are open to all Langley Research Center civil service employees except those in the NASA Engineering and Safety Center. CTAP provides general career assistance services for job opportunities in the local commuting area. Individual career counseling is also available as well as resume preparation assistance.

- Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SES CDP):
  o   The NASA Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP) offers individuals a structured approach to preparing for recurring openings in the SES. These experiences, normally to be completed over a period of 12-18 months, include formal courses and seminars, work assignments, and individual mentoring from current SES members.

- Leadership Development Program (LDP):
  o   The NASA Leadership Development Program (LDP) is a leadership development program designed as a succession-planning tool to support NASA and the Centers in developing future Agency executives. Employees selected for the LDP will be individuals who the Center expects to take on greater responsibility within the next 12 to 18 months. Greater responsibility may mean a job with expanded scope, a different assignment in a program or project, or may reflect a realignment of responsibilities within an organization. Competition for the program will be Agencywide and Enterprise panels will make final selections. The one-year program will include one 4-9 month developmental assignment outside of the Center, a collateral assignment of 3 to 6 months, bi-monthly meetings in Washington, involvement in an Agencywide project, and formal training.

STEP 4: FORMALIZING THE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

The responsibility for developing an IDP is jointly shared by the employee and supervisor. The most effective enrichment activities will result from a meeting between employee and supervisor to identify competency and training requirements. Once identified, the enrichment activities should be recorded and this documentation serves as the basis for developing an IDP.

The IDP is intended to provide a framework for the development of skills that enhance the employee's ability to contribute to the Center's mission. Completing an IDP is voluntary, initiated by the employee, and must be consistent with the objectives of the organizational unit.

To develop an IDP, an employee should:

- review LMS-CP-4312, Individual Development Plan (http://lmsr.larc.nasa.gov/admin/documents/4312.pdf):

- understand the requirements of the job;

- understand the goals of LaRC and the work unit and the results of the organizational and functional/occupational needs assessments;

- seek to improve their own performance and that of the work unit;

- understand the objectives and priorities of the new rating period;

- become familiar with the Career Development Plan associated with their occupation;

- conduct a self assessment of the competencies to determine which they are strong in and those they need to develop, considering the grade level criterion associated with each competency;

- tentatively choose one to three developmental activities for the next year, ranking them in priority order;

- discuss personal development goals and methods with the first-line supervisor;

- draft the IDP

- initiate training requests;

- attend and complete training;

- identify ways to apply training and do so; and

- discuss what has been learned and its practical application with first-line supervisor.

While many employees can achieve their career objectives in one geographic area, mobility is often a factor in achieving goals. A willingness to relocate increases the chance of acquiring the broad-based technical and supervisory experience necessary for management-level positions.

To develop an IDP, the supervisor should:

- review LMS-CP-4312, Individual Development Plan (http://lms-r.larc.nasa.gov/admin/documents/4312.pdf);

- plan and conduct career counseling - an essential element in any career program. Performance discussions should be conducted at least annually between the individual and the supervisor and is used as a basis for formulating specific career goals and training plans;

- contribute to and understand the needs assessment at the organizational level (LaRC-wide) and communicate it to employees;

- conduct the needs assessment at the functional/occupational level in their unit;

- develop a list of prioritized developmental needs based on their potential impact on goal attainment;

- assist individuals in analyzing their developmental needs in line with personal job performance and organizational needs, specifically:

  o review the employee's last performance appraisal to determine competencies that should be enhanced by training;

- o review the employee's current position description (PD) to:

  - determine if the PD correctly describes the duties to be performed;

  - list the competencies that support each duty; and

  - determine if training needs are associated with any of the competencies.

  - o draft the performance objectives for the new rating period;

  - o determine any current or evolving changes, as well as anticipated changes in the tasks, to project training needs based upon different performance objectives;

  - o review other considerations, such as workload projections, known operational changes, employee history, uncompleted training from previous years, specific and generic training requirements, mandatory and required training requirements, and LaRC's strategies, goals, and objectives;

  - o determine competency related training and development that the employee must consider to become a fully functioning member of the team;

- determine competency-related training and development that will assist the employee in career growth, meet to discuss the tentative developmental plans with each employee, and identify the training and development needed to achieve short-term goals and document them on the IDP.

- provide feedback and reassess long-term goals as short-term goals are achieved to keep the employee's career development plan realistic and on track.

- discuss with the employee learning from the training and/or development activities, and how to apply what was learned in the workplace. After a reasonable period of time, they will determine if learning was sufficient to meet the employee's and the work unit's needs.

- provide an environment where employees can discuss their progress and career.

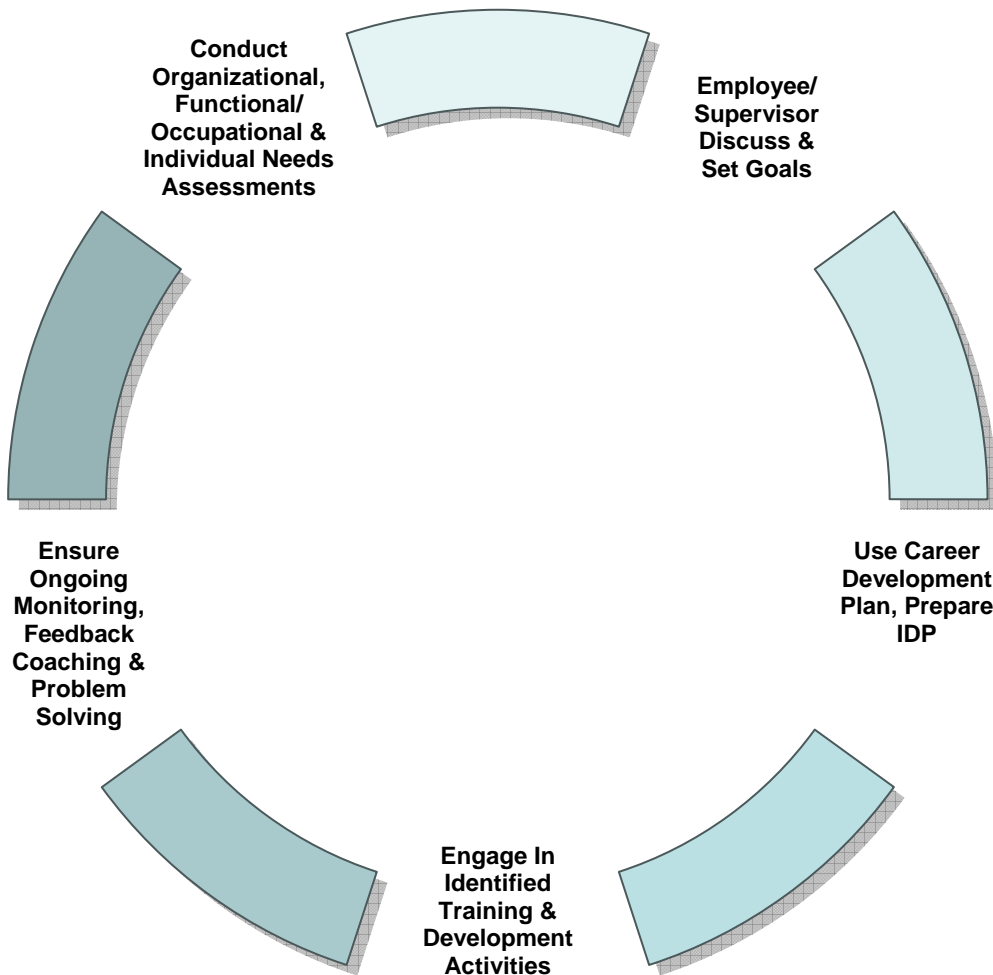**Creating an Individual Development Plan — A Summary**

The following chart summarizes the process of formalizing the Individual Development Plan (IDP). This chart illustrates the responsibilities of leaders, supervisors, and employees.

Leaders
Organizational Assessment

- Identify short-term performance measures
- Identify long-term organization goals
- Identify customer service level requirements
- Identify staffing requirements
- Implement a plan to monitor development

Supervisor
Functional/Occupational Assessment

- Identify work unit performance requirements
- Identify customer service level requirements
- Identify staffing requirements

Employee
Individual Assessment

- Understand personal performance requirements
- Understand work unit performance requirements
- Identify own development plan

Supervisor and Employee
Individual Assessment and Supervisor/Employee Discussions

- Finalize employee's IDP's

Coach Employee, Recommend Training and Development

- Finalize on-the-job -training, mentoring, and other developmental opportunities

Training/Learning Opportunities

- Engage in enrichment activities

Review Individual Development Plan (IDP) Progress

- On-the-job -training, rotations, details, etc.

Monitor Progress

- Monitor individual and work unit development

Apply New Competencies

- Apply new competencies to improve individual work unit performance

Step 5: Participating in Training and Development Activities and Adjusting the Individual Development Plan

The following diagram shows the career development cycle. The cycle begins with organizational, functional/occupational, and individual assessments, and is an ongoing process of employee-supervisor discussions, use of the appropriate Career Development Plans and IDPs, enrichment activities, and coaching.

Career Program Management Cycle

Conduct Organizational, Functional/ Occupational & Individual Needs Assessments

Employee/ Supervisor Discuss & Set Goals

Ensure Ongoing Monitoring, Feedback Coaching & Problem Solving

Use Career Development Plan, Prepare IDP

Engage In Identified Training & Development Activities

As competencies are gained, the IDP can be adjusted to focus on other competencies that need to be developed. Similarly, if, at the end of a review cycle, the competency is not acquired, the IDP should include the same or other developmental activities aimed at helping the employee to acquire the competency.

CONCLUSION

The Career Development Program provides you with tools to help you meet the challenges of the future and to sustain high performance. This program positions LaRC as a knowledge-based and results-oriented organization. You, your supervisor, and HR all have responsibilities in achieving LaRC's goals and mission.

The success of any organization is directly related to the success of its people. Over the years, the accomplishments and contributions of our employees have earned LaRC a position of leadership in human spaceflight. Development of our people to their full potential has been a critical factor in this record of success. To meet the challenges of the future, LaRC is committed to providing the resources and management support necessary to help our employees pursue their career objectives and maximize their career opportunities.

A key theme of this guide is shared responsibility for career development, with employees, supervisors and Center organizations each playing an important role. This sharing of responsibility recognizes that each party has a great deal to gain from an effective career development program: the individual is able to grow both personally and professionally, supervisors are better able to carry out their responsibilities, and the Center is in a better position to carry out its mission. Career development represents a continuing investment in the future of the Center's most important resource – its people – and, as such, deserves the best efforts of the entire LaRC team.